

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 TRSE-00 L-03 EB-07 COME-00 OMB-01 MC-02 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 /052 W

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O R 230921Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 854

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SEOUL 4518

JOINT EMBASSY /COMUSK MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS US

SUBJECT: F-5ES FOR KOREA

REF: STATE 144659

1. FOR REASONS WHICH WE HAVE THOROUGHLY OUTLINED IN PAST MESSAGES ON THE SUBJECT WE BELIEVE DECISION TO TRANSFER USED F-5ES FROM TAIWAN TO ROKS IS REGRETTABLE AND WILL CAUSE US SUBSTANTIAL DIFFICULTIES HERE. KOREANS WILL VIEW OUR ACTION AS WELSHING ON A COMMITMENT. WE BELIEVE MOREOVER THAT DECISION IS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE AT THIS TIME WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO REASSURE ROKS OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THEIR SECURITY AND THAT IT WILL BE READ IN THIS CONTEXT BY KOREANS AS INCONSISTENT WITH THIS OBJECTIVE.

2. WE AT SAME TIME REALIZE THAT DIFFICULTIES IN DELIVERING NEW F-5ES HAVE APPARENTLY PROVED INSURMOUNTABLE AND THAT PROBLEM NOW IS TO MAKE THE BEST OF THIS SITUATION. FIRST REQUIREMENT IN THIS
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REGARD IS TO BE AS OPEN AND FRANK AS POSSIBLE IN EXPLAINING TO KOREANS WHY WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FULFILL OUR UNDERTAKING TO THEM. ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WE

CAN PASS ALONG TO KOREANS AS TO WHY PLANNED F-5E
DELIVERY PROGRAM HAS PROVED NO LONGER WORKABLE,

3. BEYOND THIS HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD SEARCH
FOR ALTERNATIVES WHICH WILL HELP SOFTEN THE BLOW.
ONE SUCH ALTERNATIVE MIGHT BE TO OFFER KOREANS DELIVERY
OF 21 ROC AIRCRAFT AT FUNDED COST (\$1.6 MILLION),
WHICH WAS COST OF THE 21 AIRCRAFT DIVERTED TO ROC AND
WHICH WOULD COMPENSATE FOR "USED" CONDITION OF AIRCRAFT.
WE FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT THESE 21 AIRCRAFT
BE COUNTED AGAINST 60 AIRCRAFT FOLLOW-ON PROGRAM
FOR F-5S AND NOT IN LIEU OF 72 MAP FUNDED AIRCRAFT,
REGULAR SCHEDULED DELIVERY OF WHICH WOULD BE RESUMED
AS INDICATED REFTEL IN MARCH 1976. IN THIS
CONNECTION WE NOTE THAT JUSMAG HAS BEEN ADVISED
ORALLY BY ASSISTANT MINISTER MND FOR LOGISTICS PAIK
SEOK-CHO THAT FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE BY
PRESIDENT PAK TO SEEK PURCHASE RATHER THAN CO-PRODUCTION
OF 54 F-5ES AND 6F-5FS AND WE EXPECT TO
BE FORWARDING FORMAL REQUEST SHORTLY. THUS,
OFFERING 21 AIRCRAFT AS PART OF ADD-ON PACKAGE
WILL BE APPROPRIATE.

4. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE WE WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT KOREANS
ARE INTERESTED IN EQUIPMENT FROM INDOCHINA. ROKAF CHIEF
OF STAFF CHU YOUNG-BOCK HAS WRITTEN TO DEPUTY
COMMANDER UNC STATING HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT 21 F-5E
AIRCRAFT RECENTLY FLOWN OUT OF SOUTH VIETNAM MAY BE
AVAILABLE AND ASKING IF ROKAF COULD HAVE THESE PLANES
AS ADD-ON TO 72 MAP F-5ES. DELIVERY OF 21 EX-SVN
BIRDS THIS YEAR, IF IN SUFFICIENTLY GOOD CONDITION TO
BE REFURBISHED, WOULD POSSIBLY CAUSE ABSORPTION
PROBLEMS AND DEPENDING ON AMOUNT WE CHARGED FINANCING
WOULD BE DIFFICULT. THESE ARE POSSIBILITIES HOWEVER,
WHICH WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

5. AS WE HAVE UNDERLINED REPEATEDLY THIS IS JUST
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NOT TIME POLITICALLY TO FALL AS FAR SHORT AS
CONTEMPLATED IN REFTEL ON SUCH A MAJOR PROGRAM AS THIS
ONE. IF WE ABSOLUTELY CANNOT CONTINUE DELIVERING
NEW AIRCRAFT, WE MUST FIND MORE REASONABLE
SOLUTION THAN SIMPLY OFFERING AS SET FORTH REFTEL
USED PLANES AS
SUBSTITUTE FOR NEW ONES.
SNEIDER

SECRET

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